

VISIONING THE FUTURE: Boomer Issues and Opportunities

Day Two

Transforming Life After 50 Institute

Nov 27, 2007



AMERICANS
FOR LIBRARIES
COUNCIL

LIFELONG ACCESS

A Framework for Public Libraries

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Themes

- ▶ Why Libraries?
- ▶ What is our vision for libraries and vital aging?
- ▶ What are we at LFF doing to help realize that vision?
- ▶ Findings & Recommendations for California



WORDS

▶ Vital Aging	Productive Aging
▶ Leadership Legacy	Active Wisdom
▶ Community Work	Work After Work
▶ Shortevity	Elderhood
▶ Social Capital	Elder Glut
▶ Cognitive Vitality	Experienced Adult
▶ Midcourse Years	Prime Time
▶ Life Planning	Ageism



I. WHY LIBRARIES?

Libraries, as part of the community fabric, can and should be part of the solution.

Ken Wiggin, Connecticut State Librarian
Coming of Age Forum, November 2003
Hartford, CT



I. Why Libraries?

- ▶ Boomers seek:
 - ▶ Welcoming places
 - ▶ Meaningful activities
 - ▶ Opportunities to learn
 - ▶ Social and civic connections
 - ▶ New ways to work
 - ▶ Information and options



I. Why Libraries?

- ▶ **Trust:** The most trusted public institution
- ▶ **Place:** The community's information and meeting place
- ▶ **Access:** 16,500+ public library outlets
- ▶ **Inclusive:** No barriers for age, language, belief or economic status



I. Why Libraries?

▶ Libraries *already* support engagement and learning

- ▶ Information on Jobs, Careers, Community and Health
- ▶ Cultural and Educational Programs
- ▶ Individual and Group Learning
- ▶ Computers and computer training
- ▶ Information & Referrals for service



I. Why Libraries?

- ▶ Libraries have assets and characteristics that align with boomer's needs and interests and
- ▶ Libraries are the only non-commercial local space that encourages exploration, imagination and engagement



I Why Libraries?

- ▶ Libraries will play a key role in ensuring that the aging “opportunity” extends to all persons and groups



II. Lifelong Access Libraries

- ▶ **Centers for *Lifelong Learning*
and
*Community Engagement***



II. Lifelong Access Libraries

Reflect the inherent and expanding
roles of libraries:

- ▶ in today's “learning society”
- ▶ in the context of declining civic participation



II. Lifelong Access Libraries

▶ A NEW FRAMEWORK FOR 21st CENTURY LIBRARY SERVICE:

A specialty within adult library services geared to midlife adults who are healthy, active and ready to be meaningfully engaged



II. Lifelong Access Libraries

- ▶ See older adults as assets
- ▶ Are culturally sensitive and relevant to their communities
- ▶ Reflect current knowledge about the cognitive and other capacities of midlife adults
- ▶ Know they cannot do all the work alone



II. Lifelong Access Libraries

▶ Have dedicated:

- ▶ Collections
- ▶ Space
- ▶ Staff
- ▶ Local Advisors
- ▶ Partners

And

- ▶ Public Programs



II. Lifelong Access Core Components

- ▶ **Advisory Councils and Organizational Partners**
- ▶ **Community Conversations and other public programs**
- ▶ **Learning Activities**
- ▶ **Connections to community service opportunities**
- ▶ **Health and fitness information and programs**
- ▶ **Activities to preserve local cultural memory**



II. Lifelong Access Libraries

- ▶ Reflect an understanding of libraries' special value as a vehicle for intergenerational connections, intercultural connections and learning across the lifespan



III. The Lifelong Access Libraries Initiative (LAL)

Mission:

A national initiative to transform libraries as centers for midlife adult learning and engagement



III. LAL Initiative: Goals

1. Assist library community in reshaping its concepts and practices for services for *and with* active older adults
2. Build connections between librarians and peers in other fields undergoing change in response to the baby-boomer generation



III. LAL Strategies for Change

- ▶ Influence Leaders
- ▶ Provide training in the Lifelong Access service framework
- ▶ Develop a cadre of LAL Fellows through 3 intensive annual Institutes
- ▶ Designate and support 5 Centers of Excellence
- ▶ Create a community of practice



III. Evolution of LAL Initiative

- ▶ Concept 2001
- ▶ Development 2002-04
 - ▶ Arizona laboratory:
Life Options/Next Chapter projects
- ▶ Demonstration 2005-08
 - ▶ National Strategies
 - ▶ Training in AZ, PA, CT, MASS, NY



III. LAL Initiative To Date

- ▶ Embrace of new service framework by library leaders and participating librarians in target regions and systems
- ▶ Strong early adopters
- ▶ Ripple effect from Centers of Excellence
- ▶ Enthusiastic and influential Fellows
- ▶ Demand for training and forums by state librarians



III. ~~LAL Initiative:~~

Early Outcomes

- ▶ Shift in language and concepts expressed in library literature
- ▶ Programs on LAL activities at national and state associations
- ▶ Heightened awareness of libraries in the “aging” community
- ▶ Investments by state libraries
 - ▶ Massachusetts, Arizona
 - ▶ Connecticut, North Carolina
 - ▶ **CALIFORNIA**



III. ~~LAL Initiative:~~

Complementary Project

- ▶ *Age in America:* Building the capacities of libraries and museums to collaborate to create local programs on the experience of aging as a cultural phenomenon
 - ▶ Norfolk, VA
 - ▶ Suffolk Co., NY
 - ▶ Hartford, CT



~~IV. LAL Initiative: Findings &~~ Lifelong Access **Recommendations**

- ▶ Creativity and quality do not depend on size or money
- ▶ Successful Implementation of Lifelong Access requires:
 - ▶ Buy-in at the top
 - ▶ Commitment to go beyond business as usual
 - ▶ Cultural change within the entire library
 - ▶ Partnerships and Programs
- ▶ Librarians are often ill-prepared to function as facilitators of learning



~~IV. LAL Initiative: Findings &~~ Lifelong Access Recommendations

- ▶ The library community is relatively isolated from peers in complementary professions and disciplines, yet have much to offer and to learn
- ▶ The library community must develop a base of understanding and pedagogy around services *across the lifespan*
- ▶ To sustain and expand the work started, there must be a career track, titles, etc.



IV. THE VALUE OF IMAGINATION

Libraries have the potential to make the process of re-imagining, re-visioning, and raising consciousness possible. People need to re-think what they can become.

Mary Catherine Bateson

Libraries for the Future Lifelong Access National
Leadership Institute, August, 2006



Join the Lifelong Access community of practice:

www.lifelonglibraries.org

